

# The Cadiz Record



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## Farmers' Marketing: Steering more families to 'fun farms'

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Proprietors of destination farms — such as those with corn mazes and pumpkin patches in the fall — met at Barkley Lodge last week to discuss publicizing their ventures — call it farmers' marketing.

The opportunity to pick a pumpkin and go for a hayride is decades old, as are most media in which they are advertised. The Internet, however, as well as more detailed market research about the travel and media habits of different demographics, is allowing for much more targeted advertising.

Much of last week's conference, attended by about 18 people, dealt with ultra-specifics. For instance, one handout ranked a list of road-sign color schemes by desirability and readability. A graph followed illustrating how far the signs should be placed from entrances, based on the speed limit of the attraction's road.

Janet Johnson, an Allen County extension agent, gave a presentation about becoming more media savvy.

"Marketing is a series of layers," she said, outlining a sample



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*This farmer appreciate the power of advertising, turning their car into a rolling billboard.*

advertising budget using various media.



In addition to a sample advertising budget, Johnson also gave tips on how proprietors might approach media to get free coverage.

“Piggy-back on current news,” she said. Johnson encouraged everyone to have a story about their venture or product they could casually present in 30 seconds and to have a packet of handouts and information ready to give any member of the media.

“You’re packaging yourself to sell,” Johnson said as she briefed the attendees on how to handle television appearances. “You have to believe in you.”

In addition to the regular marketing vehicles like TV and radio, Johnson encouraged the attendees to be on the lookout for other advertising opportunities — school field trips, for instance.

“It’s educational, but it’s a marketing tool, as well,” she said. A handout briefed the attendees on how they could market their farms to schools as a field-trip destination.

Throughout her presentation, Johnson repeated ad nauseum what appears to be the slogan for the Department of Agriculture’s Division of Agritourism: “Farms are fun.”

In an aside, she revealed that market research found people didn’t like the term ‘agritourism’ — apparently the word doesn’t jive with the public’s desire to “come and feel the friendliness” of farms.

*For the rest of this story, please see this week's edition of The Cadiz Record.*